

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE DIGNITARIES
FROM ACHILL ISLAND, IRELAND

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dignitaries Ireland who are spending St. Patrick's Day in my home district of Cleveland. My city is honored to have them with us on such an important holiday.

Our four distinguished guests hail from Achill Island, Ireland. They are: Mr. Thomas McNamara, Achill Tourism Chair; Father Pat Gilligan, Achill Tourism Committee Member; Ms. Karen Grealis, Achill Tourism Manager; and Ms. Adrian Kilbane, Achill Tourism Public Relations Officer. Together, they have left their homes to spend a very important holiday with us.

Rich with cultural heritage and diversity, the city of Cleveland includes a very important Irish population. Never forgetting their roots, the Cleveland community never forgets to celebrate ethnic holidays. Saint Patrick's Day, traditionally a day of lavish celebration and remembrance of one's heritage, is revered by the City of Cleveland by an extensive parade. My city is lucky this year to have with us a delegation of dignitaries from Achill Island, Ireland to assist us in the festivities. Visiting to help us remember our shared past, these people should give us all pause to remember our families and our heritage.

It should be of great joy to everybody in Cleveland that we have such honorable people visiting us on such an important holiday. My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring the distinguished delegation of visitors from Achill Island, Ireland.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR ALZHEIMER'S, AUTISM, AND LYME DISEASE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I testified before the Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education Appropriations Subcommittee on the importance of setting aside sufficient funding for critical life-saving and life affirming medical research.

First Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend President Bush for continuing the commitment to double biomedical research funding in five years by providing a \$2.8 billion increase for the National Institute of Health (NIH) in his budget proposal to Congress. The President's proposal provides the largest annual funding increase in NIH's history, and it is my hope

that Congress follows in the President's footsteps.

Today I am here to represent the interests of those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease, autism, and Lyme disease. These devastating diseases have left the elderly helpless, the children voiceless, and people across the nation getting weaker and sicker.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

As co-founder of the Bipartisan Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I am seeking support for increased funding of the National Institute on Aging so that it could accommodate an additional \$200 million in Alzheimer's research. This appropriation will help us reach our goal of funding Alzheimer's research at \$1 billion by fiscal year 2003 and allow us to launch an all-out assault on Alzheimer's disease.

This year, Mr. Speaker, we hope to increase funding for research to discover ways in which to prevent Alzheimer's for two critical target populations. The first target is people who will have clinical Alzheimer's disease 10 to 20 years from now. Researchers must find ways to slow or alter the changes that are already taking place in the brain so that symptoms of Alzheimer's never develops. The second target population is those persons who are already suffering with the disease. Researchers need more resources to help them find ways to prevent the health crises, the unmanageable behaviors, and the rapid functional decline that leads to hospitalization and nursing home placement. We are aware of the tremendous cost Alzheimer's already brings to bare on society. Not only is there an economic burden, but Alzheimer's also destroys the quality of life for the patient and the caregiver alike.

An increased investment from the government will allow for researchers to search for simple, practical, widely available, and affordable ways to detect the earliest changes in the brain.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen that the Alzheimer's investments Congress has made over the past decade are now paying off in rapid discoveries regarding the basic mechanisms of the disease, the complex interplay of genetic and environmental risk factors, and the treatments and interventions that can slow decline. Discoveries in the past year alone have generated great excitement in the field of Alzheimer's. For instance, scientists have developed a third FDA-approved drug designed for the treatment of the disease's cognitive symptoms. In addition, scientists have completed Phase 1 of a clinical trial involving humans in which they used a vaccine that appears to prevent in the brains of mice the amyloid deposition that forms plaques which characterize Alzheimer's disease.

The United States enters the 21st Century facing an imminent epidemic. By 2050, 14 million of today's baby boomers will have Alzheimer's disease. For most of them, the process that will destroy their memories, their

lives, and their savings has already begun. The annual cost of Alzheimer's diseases will soar to at least \$375 billion, overwhelming our health care system and bankrupting Medicare and Medicaid. The only way to avoid this crisis is to act now.

AUTISM

As the co-founder of the Coalition for Autism Research and Education (C.A.R.E.), I am seeking support for the provision of \$5 million for the Center of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help the states conduct autism epidemiology research.

Autism is a developmental disorder that has robbed at least 400,000 children of their ability to communicate and interact. The disorder affects at least one in every 500 children in America. Currently, there is limited information on the prevalence, cause, or treatment of autism.

To address the lack of understanding Mr. Speaker, CDC began conducting epidemiological research on the incidence and surveillance of autism in two metropolitan areas in Georgia and my home state, New Jersey. Last year, Congress made a major and vital investment in the centers of excellence, and as a result, CDC expanded its research to include data collection in West Virginia, Arizona, South Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware. CDC's efforts in these states seek to identify the prevalence rate of autism and to verify that these cases are accurately diagnosed. The studies also seek to establish any relevant environmental or other exposures in these communities.

The basic data collection and verification is integral to better understanding the incidence of autism, the factors which may contribute to a higher rate of incidence, and effective treatment. The challenge is that effective analysis of this data must wait for the data collection efforts to expand to an additional 24 states.

CDC must receive the funding to collect data from approximately 30 states before it can move forward with a comprehensive analysis of trends that may reveal correlative factors, potential causes, and hopefully effective treatments and cures for autism.

LYME DISEASE

As a Member of Congress who has been active on the subject of Lyme disease for nearly two decades, I believe there are two critical areas we must focus upon if our nation is to better control the disease. First, I am seeking support for an increase of \$8 million at the NIH, which would bring total Lyme disease funding to \$32 million. NIH would use this infusion of funds to make the development and improvement of direct detection tests for Lyme a priority. Second, we must double the funding at CDC and bring total Lyme disease funding to \$16 million. The CDC has admitted

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